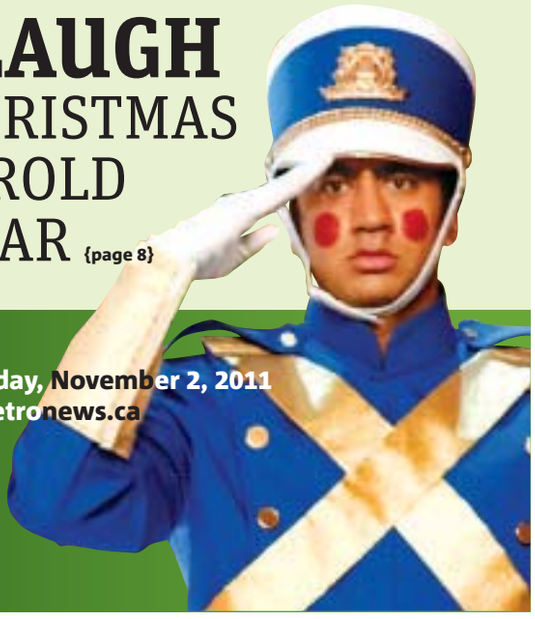
CONJOINED TWINS SEPARATED AFTER DAY-LONG SURGERY
{page 5}

WHITE YOU ARE
POWDER HOUNDS GEAR UP FOR A BIG DUMP THIS WINTER {page 10}

YULE LAUGH
EARLY CHRISTMAS WITH HAROLD AND KUMAR {page 8}



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Wednesday, November 2, 2011
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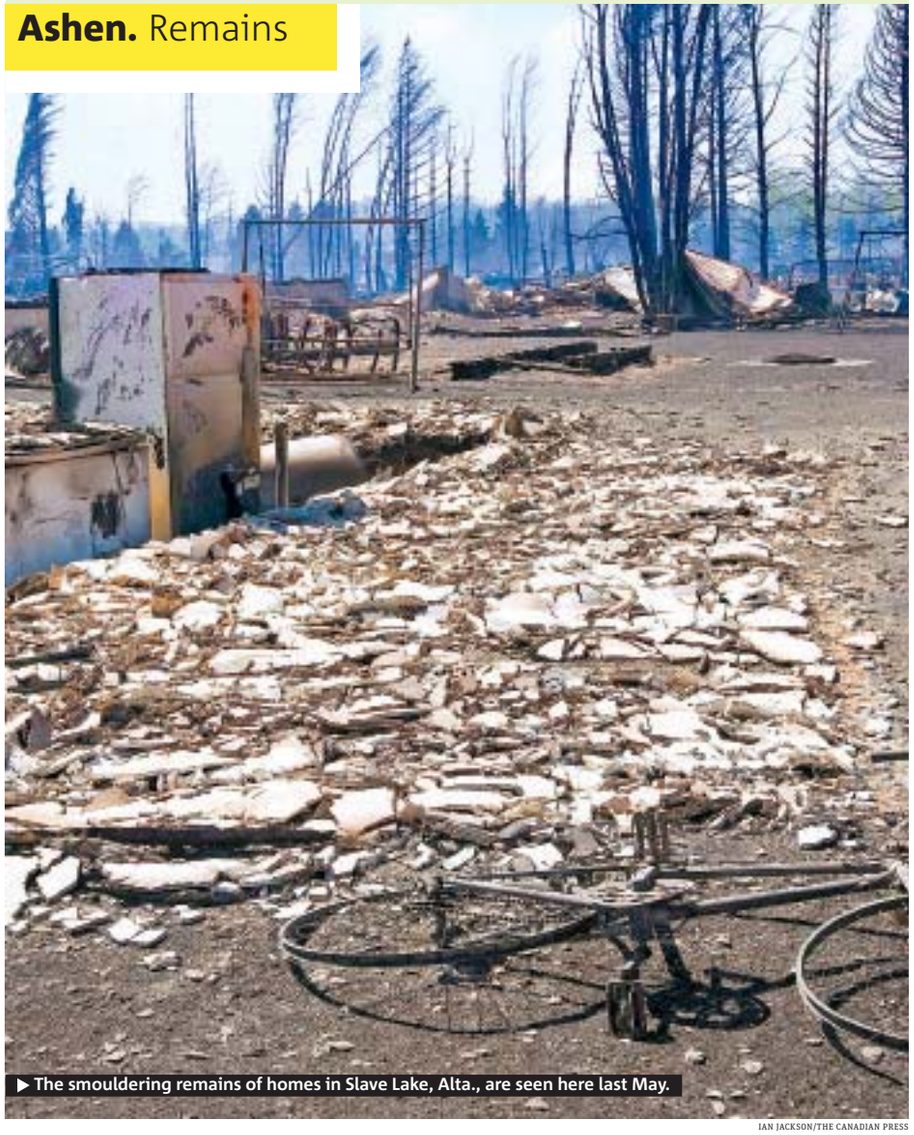
Ashen. Remains



▶ The smouldering remains of homes in Slave Lake, Alta., are seen here last May.

IAN JACKSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Arson blamed for Slave Lake fire

Whole neighbourhoods were flattened by a devastating wildfire earlier this year that swept through the town of 7,000, destroying nearly half the buildings. Yesterday, the Alberta provincial government announced it suspected the fire that started it all was deliberately set. **See story pg. 4.**

Victim not a gangster, friend says

◐ Fears of retribution loom large after shootings ◐ Police ask public for tips

JAMES TURNER
@METRONEWS.CA

The man shot dead in the parking lot of a McPhillips Street hotel was a devoted father of four who had long ago broken active ties to an African street gang, says a close family friend.

Mohamed (Moe) Ali Omar, 28, was shot dead outside the Lincoln Motor Inn early Sunday, police said yesterday, adding Omar was with "a group of associates" who were shot at by a lone male suspect as they prepared to leave,

A 17-year-old boy who was also with the group at the time was also shot, but survived. Police couldn't say if they believe either victim was specifically targeted.

The friend, who did not wish to be named, said she was "irked" at police saying Omar was linked to gang activity because his involvement in crime is so dated. Court records indicate he has links to members of the African Mafia street gang.

"To even mention he was gang-involved five years ago is just irritating," she said. "He's not doing any of that stuff. He's just a sweet, sweet person," said the friend.

Court records confirm Omar had been charged with obstructing a peace officer, but the charge was stayed. In his limited record is one drug possession conviction from 2006 for which he received a discharge.

After being shot, Omar was left bleeding in the lot as the group he was with rushed to a local hospital to get help for the wounded youth.

The suspect, described as a black man with a medium to stocky build, had jumped out of a dark SUV, police said, adding he may have been wearing a hooded sweatshirt. They said the vehicle could possibly be a Lincoln Navigator from the early 2000s that has dark-coloured rims and dark tinted windows.

Omar was also once detained, but never charged, in connection to an undercover drug bust near Central Park in 2005, court records show.

Splinter group

▶ The African Mafia formed as a splinter group of the Mad Cowz after some members became angry at how the gang's leaders responded to the killing of a young member.

1 news

A study of U.S. nurses broadens the apparent link between breast cancer and alcohol consumption to include light drinkers. Scan code for story.

1 Download the free ScanLife app with your smartphone at 2dscan.com

2 Use your smartphone to scan 2D barcodes in Metro

3 The codes will direct your mobile browser to **m.metronews.ca**

On the web at metronews.ca

The month of October brought welcome relief to investors, but Allan Small warns that we're not out of the woods yet. More at metronews.ca/investing

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JAMES TURNER/METRO

▶ The University of Manitoba's Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht — also known as "Professor Popsicle" for his cold-water research — holds up an autographed bowl he decorated in support of Winnipeg Harvest's Empty Bowls program. He and 34 other notables auctioned off their works at the MTS Centre yesterday.

Record numbers using food banks

Reliance on services among Canadians is much too high, Food Banks Canada says
An estimated 700,000 people need help putting food on the table every month

JAMES TURNER
@METRONEWS.CA

The number of people using food banks in Canada remains near record highs two years after the end of the last recession.

The annual study done by Food Banks Canada shows that during one snapshot month in 2011, more than 850,000 people relied on food handouts.

That's down a slight two per cent from the record high of 2010, but it's the second highest on record, and 26 per cent higher than before the recession in 2008.

Winnipeg Harvest's David Northcott told media the study comes as no surprise. "We're currently at 47,000 individuals (using food banks) in Winnipeg, and throughout the province that number is about 58,000," Northcott said, adding about half of those are children. "It's very worrying."

The numbers in Winnipeg set a record two months ago.

"The effects of the recession are still being felt across the country," the Food Banks Canada report says. "As a result, a near-record number of people are unable to afford enough food for themselves and their families."

The report provides one of the most up-to-date national indicators of poverty. The latest Statistics Canada data show that the recession halted poverty reduction during the first part of the millennium.

The percentage of people living below the low-income cutoff in 2009 was 9.6 per cent, the data-gathering agency has said.

Food Banks Canada wants governments to invest in affordable housing, better income supports and more recognition of non-standard forms of employment that often come with low pay, little security and no benefits.

Improvements to Employment Insurance and some sort of wage insurance would help, the report adds.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Who's going hungry?

• About 2.5 per cent of the population, the Food Banks Canada report says.
• 38 per cent of food-bank users were under the age of 18. Manitoba had the highest proportion of young people, at 50 per cent.
• 40 per cent of recipients were single people living alone.
• More than half the users were on social assistance, while 18 per cent had earnings from current or recent employment.
• More often than not, they were living in rental housing, but only 22 per cent of them were receiving any kind of housing subsidy. About six per cent were homeless.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pantry raid

Winnipeg Harvest's Top 10 most wanted list:

- **Canned fish and poultry**
- **Canned fruit and** vegetables (packed in own juice)
- **Canned stew, chili, baked** beans
- **Peanut butter**
- **Baby food**
- **Whole grain or whole** wheat pasta
- **Rice: Brown, converted or** parboiled
- **Canned spaghetti sauce or** tomatoes
- **Cereal: High fibre,** non-sugar-coated
- **Canned soup: Lentil, pea,** vegetable

How bawdy shops ply their stock-in-trade

Brothel-keepers as manipulative as any pimp, without the violence: Study

JAMES TURNER
@METRONEWS.CA

A mind for business, a measure of online savvy and a mendacious ability to manipulate using influence, not force.

These are among the attributes some who operate illegal sex-trade enterprises share, a report authored by a veteran Winnipeg police morals unit investigator suggests.

For more than a decade, Sgt. Gene Bowers has been the city's go-to expert for police when it comes to probing the local sex-trade underworld.

The Crown requested Bowers file a statement of opinion regarding the case of a woman awaiting sentencing for running a Wolseley-area bawdy house.

"There are a number of overt and oppressive strategies that bawdy-house keepers, escort services, massage parlour owners and pimps can use to procure people into prostitution or keep them from leaving the sex-trade," Bowers said in his report.

But often, a common tactic operators employ to keep people working for them is to befriend them and let them believe they're engaged in a joint business relationship, Sgt. Gene Bowers said.

"The relationship is exploitative, but appears to be reciprocal on the surface," he stated. "As a result, threats, violence or overt tactics are not required to have individuals continue on prostituting themselves while willingly turning over their money."

But, ultimately, it's the business operator who comes out on top because the commodity in question — sexual services — can be continually sold with little effort or cost to the operator after workers have been procured, he stated.

METRO

There's a whole slew of slang and shorthand in the sex-trade underworld. Here's a few common terms.
GFE: Girlfriend experience. The promise of more intimacy than 'typical' paid sexual encounters
DOUBLES: A threesome
INMATES: Police term for bawdy-house sex workers
LE: Law enforcement
DFK: Deep french kissing
MSOG: Multiple shots on goal (multiple orgasms)
FBSM: Full body sensual massage

Tackling the trade

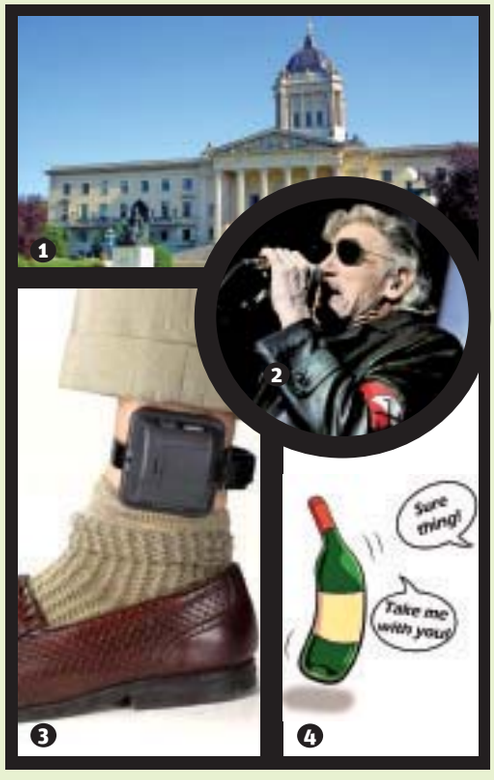
Winnipeg police projects targeting the sex-trade:

- **Project Urban Renewal, 2001:** Probe into drugs and sex-for-hire in the West End targets the relationship between sex-workers and dealers.
- **Project INXS, 2003:** Targets 25-year-old bawdy-house operation on Sherbrook Street. Unique in how undercover police used an internet profile to gather information. Property was seized and owner-operator fined $9,000.
- **Project So Long John, 2003:** Represented a switch in focus from targeting sex-trade workers to the 'Johns' who bought sex from them. More than 70 men arrested and many vehicles seized.
- **Project Decoy, 2005:** An in-house training program is developed to boost the number of officers able to do covert sex-trade investigations.
- **Project Relentless, 2007:** Project to collect DNA from Johns on behalf of cold-case unit detectives for comparison against samples from their files.

Source: CV of Sgt. Gene Bowers, Winnipeg Police Service

News in pictures

PHOTOS
1. JAMES TURNER/METRO
2. GETTY IMAGES
3. SUPPLIED
4. JENNA CUMBERS/FOR METRO



1 The Manitoba Government has closed its latest session — without tabling or passing a single piece of legislation.

2 Roger Waters, co-founder of Pink Floyd, will present 'The Wall' at the MTS Centre on May 31. Tickets go on sale Nov. 14 at 10 a.m.

3 The Manitoba government says they're moving forward on ankle monitors for domestic and other crime offenders. Police Chief Keith McKaskill says he's for any measure that prevents crime.

4 More changes to the Manitoba Liquor Control Act have come into effect, including allowing people to bring wine to restaurants — if the restaurants allow it. METRO

Arson behind massive Slave Lake fire: Officials

IAN JACKSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

▶ A home destroyed by the fire in Slave Lake.

The Alberta government says it believes arson was behind a wildfire that ravaged the town of Slave Lake last spring.

Frank Oberle, minister of sustainable resources, yesterday said that the file has been turned over to the RCMP.

"It's extremely disappointing and my heart goes out to the people that lost homes or property," Oberle told a news conference.

"This further exacerbates that."

He said his investigators have determined it was arson because they've ruled out all other possible causes for the blaze, which took out 400 homes and businesses on May 15. He wouldn't say how they've definitively ruled out the fire was not set accidentally, such as by a careless camper failing to properly extinguish a fire.

"Our investigation eliminated all natural, industrial or accidental causes."

Oberle said investigators have determined where the fire started, but he wouldn't give the co-ordinates.

"We know there was no lightning at that site, no power-line malfunction and no campfire located at that site, so a process of elimination gets us to the only reasonable conclusion." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costly disaster

- Total damage was pegged at $700 million, which insurance adjusters estimate makes it the second-costliest disaster next to the Quebec-Ontario ice storm of 1998, which cost about $1.8 billion.
- The fire forced all 7,000 residents to leave for two weeks as fire crews completed salvage work and police secured the area.
- No one was hurt, but a fire-fighting helicopter pilot crashed on Lesser Slave Lake and died. There were 1,400 firefighters deployed along with 170 helicopters and tankers.
- The province delivered almost $300 million in aid, including millions for modular homes for residents who lost everything.

▶ Chef Richard Julien of Chef Live carves a 600-pound pumpkin with a chainsaw at Halifax Seed yesterday.

HEATHER GILLIS/FOR METRO

Getting messy for a good cause

Julien says he plans to use the leftovers for this year's Pumpkins for Prostate pie-making fundraiser.

Free Osteoporosis Information Session
"Sticks and Stones May Break Your Bones..."
but so can other things!
Wednesday, November 2, 2011
7:00 – 8:30 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Hilton Suites Winnipeg Airport
Stevenson Ballroom D, 1800 Wellington Avenue, Winnipeg
Join Dr. Richard Boroditsky, Professor, Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Reproductive Sciences, at the University of Manitoba and Medical Director, Mature Woman's Centre Victoria General Hospital, for an evening of conversation, questions and answers about good bone health and osteoporosis, especially for women 40-65 approaching, or in, menopause. Because midlife hormone changes affect far more than your monthly cycle. Your bones are at risk and now is the time to do something about it!
Preregistration not required. First come, first seated.
Coffee and tea will be served.
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menopauseandu.ca

Sex assault alleged in torture case

Former roommate is 'evil, smart, mean, twisted'

A man the Crown alleges was tortured by his former roommate says he was beaten so viciously he thought he was going to die and he submitted to performing sex acts in the hope that would make the attacks stop.

"Personally, I thought it was disgusting. I was in survival mode," the man, who can't be named, told court yesterday. "I would do anything not to get beaten any more."

It was his second day testifying at the trial of Dustin Paxton, who has pleaded not guilty to charges of aggravated assault, sexual assault and forcible confinement. The charges were laid after the man was dumped — starved, battered and beaten — at a Regina hospital in the spring of 2010.

Yesterday was the first time the witness discussed the allegations of sexual assault. He said Paxton would require him to provide sexual favours that "escalated" over time. "I was still getting beaten the whole time and I would do anything not to get beat."

Court has already heard how the man, 28, considered Paxton, 31, a close friend.

He testified earlier that he took the abuse because he didn't want to seem like a sissy and had dreams of making big money in Calgary. THE CANADIAN PRESS

6th suspicious package found at party store

Bomb-squad robots were back at work at a Toronto costume store yesterday after two more suspicious packages were found at the business, bringing the total to six.

Police say officers checking Amazing Party and Costume found the sixth package around noon.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cancer our biggest killer: StatsCan

A new report says cancer and heart disease were responsible for just over half of Canada's 238,617 deaths in 2008.

And Statistics Canada reports cancer was the leading cause of death in every province and territory for the first time.

Cancer accounted for 30 per cent of all deaths in 2008. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian, family freed from Saudi jail

A Canadian man, his wife and two young children have been released after spending more than a month in a Saudi Arabian prison.

A senior government official says Majeed Uddin Ahmed and his family have been released on bail and given 25 days to leave Saudi Arabia.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

One operation, two new lives

- Conjoined twins are separated in day-long surgery
- Two-year-old girls were joined at chest, abdomen

Angelina and Angelica Sabuco have just been given new lives — apart.

In the two years since they were born, the twin girls have been joined at the chest and abdomen.

But yesterday doctors at Stanford University's children's hospital in California separated them in a remarkable day-long operation.

The surgery on the two Philippines-born tots was expected to take nine hours. More than 20 doctors and nurses were taking part.

By mid-afternoon, hospital spokesperson Reena Mukamal announced the girls had been separated and moved to their own operating rooms for the second phase of the procedure — reconstructing the area where they were connected.

Mukamal said doctors were pleased with the progress of the surgery so far.

The complex operation involved cutting along the girls' skin and muscle and separating their diaphragms and livers.

Severing the liver was going to be the riskiest part of the procedure because of potential blood loss, said lead surgeon Dr. Gary Hartman before the operating room drama began.

Hartman, who has done five separation procedures at medical centres around the U.S., said he expected the operation to go well.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Angelina, left, and Angelica Sabuco are cuddled by mom Ginady Sabuco a day before the complex operation that separated them.

"We want them to live normally. When they argue, they can be alone. When they play, they can play together or apart. When they don't want to see each other, they won't have to."
GINADY SABUCO, MOTHER

Keeping the girls joined would carry bigger risks for their health, doctors had said.

If one conjoined twin died, the other would die within hours. Muscular and skeletal deformities can also worsen with time.

Before the operation, the girls' livers, diaphragms, breastbones, chest and abdominal wall muscles were fused. They have separate hearts, brains, kidneys, stomachs and intestines.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Black day for white-collar crime

Fraudsters found guilty of white-collar crimes in Canada now face tougher sentences and penalties.

Ottawa officially introduced tougher rules yesterday to deal with Ponzi schemers and white-collar fraudsters, part of just-adopted Tory legislation first tabled in 2009.

The stiffer penalties include:

A mandatory two-year prison sentence for fraud over $1 million; financial restitution for victims; and latitude for a judge to stiffen a sentence because of aggravating factors.

"This legislation stands up for victims of fraud and makes it easier for them to seek the restitution that they deserve," said Justice Minister Rob Nicholson.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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NOVEMBER 3: 11 – 4 PM
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PORTAGE PLACE

MY PROTEST WILL LAST LONGER THAN KIM'S MARRIAGE

JUST SAYIN' ...

PAUL SULLIVAN
METRO

That's it.

I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore.

Today, the news wires are clogged with the pathetic denouement of the Kardashian marriage. Kim, famous for nothing, dissolved her $10-million wedding 72 days after she and collateral damage Kris Humphries collected a cool $17.8 million for royalties from the vastly overblown event.

How do I know all this? All I had to do was go to my home page, iGoogle, and there were 2,968 Kardashian stories available for my edification.

At the same time Syria put land mines along the border with Lebanon, but that was a real yawner warranting a mere 360 articles. Do the math. That's 10 times more articles about Kim Kardashian than impending war between Syria and Lebanon.

"But enough about Kim Kardashian's $10-million phoney marriage, which could feed the one billion people on this planet who go hungry every night. That's just wrong."

This much ado about nothing comes at a time when journalists are whining about how our precious profession is being twittered to death by ducks. The truth is, what's really killing the news is a serious overdose of Kim Kardashian.

Of course, there wouldn't be any Kim Kardashian news if the public didn't want it. What's wrong with you people? Had enough of Jennifer Aniston?

Still, I wonder about all those otherwise grownup professionals who filed copy about the world's foremost phoney and her feckless boy-toy. It reminds me of the Richard Brautigan poem I Feel Horrible. She Doesn't: "I wander around the house like a sewing machine that's just finished sewing a turd to a garbage can lid."

As a protest against this outrage against humanity, I will Occupy the Internet until it stops.

I don't want to hear any more mealy mouthed arguments for "celebrity" journalism and "reality" TV, the Kardashian spawning ground.

I don't want to hear any more nonsense about how journalism is threatened by technology or the Mayan Calendar or global warming. It's threatened by bad choices. All we have to do is stop writing about Kim Kardashian. And other pointless phenomena.

I'm OK with confining Justin Bieber and Jennifer Aniston to the entertainment pages, although the actual form of entertainment has yet to be determined. But enough about Kim Kardashian's $10-million phoney marriage, which could feed the one billion people on this planet who go hungry every night. That's just wrong.

I know, it's hard to Occupy the Internet, as that's the whole point of the Internet. There's no there there. But that doesn't stop Kim Kardashian, who does it every day.

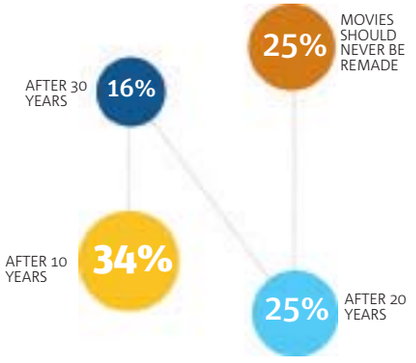
So it won't stop me either. This is my tent. I'm staying until they drag me away.

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsaying

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

How soon is too soon to remake a film?



Local tweets

- **@Knoxvle:** Apparently according to my co-worker we are all alien brothers and sisters, who will one day get beamed up.... #crazy
- **@thomaspashko:** Today, I wore holes in my shoes. But just the toes. So my heels are elevated a solid inch, and my toes are just touchin' concrete.
- **@tskomro:** I somehow managed to double order a sushi roll. I can't throw it out, so instead I shall burst trying to eat the last roll.
- **@mike_thomas:** Sometimes I do know what I'm talking about...#outofcontexttweet
- **@BubblesOquendo:** I'm starting to get so jittery. My hands won't stop shaking. I will now start to refrain from caffeine. :'(
- **@bkives:** Red River in #Winnipeg now 3.1 feet above normal winter ice level, its lowest level since March 14, 2010.
- **@orrellijmz1:** Winnipeg Jets are officially winless at home since 1996. Time for a coaching change? NHLfi5A
- **@ManitobaMaz:** Driving with the sunroof open in November. #unreal #Winnipeg

Letters

Human sexuality is a wonderful and complex phenomenon and we can't always easily answer questions like "Am I gay?" or "Am I bisexual?" without deeper introspection. If you have identified your sexual orientation, and you are gay or lesbian, you may be struggling to come to terms with it.

In Dr. Richard Niolon's coming-out process he identifies five stages a person can follow:

1. Self-recognition as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).
2. Disclosure to others.
3. Socialization with other LGBT.
4. Positive self-identification.
5. Integration and acceptance, where you are open about your sexuality to yourself, even if you prefer being discreet about it.

The most difficult part of this five-step program is Step 1 — acknowledging and accepting your sexual orientation.

While the Canadian law is extremely supportive of gay and lesbian rights, in the end, psychological and emotional support are equally important.

ALEX SANGHA
SOCIAL WORKER
DELTA, B.C.

metro PHOTO CHALLENGE

▶ This photo titled No Man is an Island was submitted to the Relationships category by Louise Bourgeois from Ottawa.

photo of the day

Metro invites its readers to join the Metro Global Photo Challenge — running in 100 cities on four continents — to win fantastic prizes and world-wide recognition. Enter your digital photos at metrophotochallenge.com. The contest runs until Nov. 22. As well as a chance to win a trip to any city Metro publishes, one submission will also be featured here daily.

WEIRD NEWS

Resorts have gone to the dogs

You are spending the holidays with Aunt Nellie in Kansas. Your dog will be staying in a hotel suite called Neiman Barcus with a flat-screen TV. There might be surf lessons, catered meals, a massage, pawdicure, spa bath and photo shoot.

Boarding your pet has changed a lot over the past decade. If money is no object, there is no end to the extravagances you can order for your pet. The Barkley Pet Hotel & Day Spa — which really does have a Neiman Barcus suite — is a one-of-a-kind animal funhouse

REED SAXON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Yorkshire terrier Betsey Johnson

in Westlake Village, northwest of Los Angeles. You can rent a Serenity Suite for $44 a night or reserve a storefront suite on Rodeo Drive or Hollywood Boulevard (they start at $72.50 a night). Add-ons include day-camp sessions, limousine pickup and delivery, surf lessons, charm school, a mud mask, obedience training, holiday fur-dyeing and filet mignon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. YESTERDAY

TSX	Dollar
- 136.95 (12,115.10)	- 2.18¢ ($98.15¢ US)

Oil	Natural gas
- $1.00 US ($92.19 US)	$3.781 (- 15.0¢)

Gold $1,711.80 (- $13.40)

Respect for referendum: Carney

Bank of Canada governor says vote in Greece may build support needed for austerity

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney says he respects the Greek prime minister's controversial call for a referendum on a new bailout package, saying the vote could be useful if it helps build support for necessary austerity.

But within hours, the question of whether such a vote would take place was up in the air as members of George Papandreou's government threatened to revolt over the surprise announcement.

That changed late yesterday, however, with his cabinet expressing unanimous support for the prime minister's surprise decision to call for a referendum on a hard-won European plan to rescue the Greek economy.

News of the referendum adds even more pressure on G20 leaders to bring a sense of calm to situation and restore market confidence that policy-makers know what they are doing.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty described the situation as "fragile and uncertain," to the Commons finance committee.

Meanwhile, Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said the impact of the Greek debt crisis on financial markets shows "how interdependent the world economies are."

Carney said that he still expects bailout measures will contain the situation — "but that's different than resolving the issues, (which) ... is going to take years." Details still need to be ironed out and Europe must implement the initiatives, and there may still be additional measures needed, he cautioned.

Markets will be looking for G20 leaders to unveil more details at the two-day summit in Cannes, starting Thursday, where Carney is to be confirmed as new head of the Financial Stability Board, placing the Canadian central banker at the forefront of measures to reform global financial markets.

Carney told the committee the European debt crisis remains the biggest concern for the global economy as well as Canada's.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2 scene

Putting the 'X' in Xmas

It's been six years since their Guantanamo Bay adventure Harold and Kumar are back with ridiculous yuletide antics Watch as they burn down the Christmas tree and party with Jesus

IN FOCUS

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

The week after Halloween is a strange time to be writing about Christmas movies. Almost like cooking a Thanksgiving dinner in July.

But if department stores can display Lady Gaga masks beside Christmas ornaments and Hollywood can release A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas while we're still digesting our Halloween haul, I can write about some movies that put the tinsel in Tinsel Town.

Harold and Kumar isn't your average Christmas movie.

I doubt Jimmy Stewart would have considered burning down the family Christmas tree part of his wonderful Yuletide life, but Harold and Kumar aren't the first to put the X into Xmas.

Many movies are set at Christmastime — the Brat Packer flick Less Than Zero features an LA Yule, and Die Hard takes place on Christmas Eve — but I'm thinking of movies that use the holidays as a springboard for the action.

The raunchiest Christmas movie has to Bad Santa, starring Billy Bob Thornton as a boozed-up, thieving department store Kris Kringle.

Unsentimental and crude, Bad Santa is bound to make the elves choke on their eggnog.

Dan Aykroyd also played a less than cuddly Santa in Trading Places. Drunk, disorderly and waving a gun around, he even has a fish hidden in his fake beard.

Unwrap Mixed Nuts, the 1994 Nora Ephron black comedy, and you'll find Christmas tree theft, lunatics and the worst Christmas gift ever: a dead body.

Staying up on Christmas Eve, waiting for Santa to come, will be easy after watching Black Christmas. You'll be too scared to sleep!

The tinsel terror about a mysterious killer in the attic is considered to be the first modern slasher movie.

Gremlins mixes horror, humour and ho ho ho's. Set at Christmas, the story of little creatures who turn nasty when wet features a gory story about a missing father, a chimney, an overstuffed Santa suit and the punchline, "And that's how I found out there was no Santa Claus."

A very merry Crime Christmas can be had in both The Ref and Reindeer Games.

In The Ref, cat burglar Dennis Leary soon regrets breaking into the home of squabbling couple Kevin Spacey and Judy Davis on Christmas Eve.

Reindeer Games sees Ben Affleck reluctantly rob a casino at Christmas.

The movie is such a lump of coal that one of its stars had this to say about it: "That was a bad, bad, bad movie," said Charlize Theron.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ John Cho as Harold, left, Neil Patrick Harris as himself and Kal Penn as Kumar in A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas.

Scene at a glance

Jimmy Kimmel is going to be cracking jokes for the U.S. president. The White House Correspondents' Association says the Jimmy Kimmel Live! host will be the featured comedian at its 98th annual dinner next year. Association president Caren Bohan said yesterday that the 43-year-old entertainer was chosen because his "humour is sophisticated and edgy while appealing to a wide audience." The White House Correspondents' Association dinner is traditionally attended by the president and his wife, along with various government officials and members of the press corps. Kimmel said in a statement that he is looking forward to being part of the event on April 28, 2012, adding, "I love dinner."
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Ugly Betty to foxy Roxie: America Ferrera to play the Chicago femme fatale in London

Taking the kiddie out of kid lit

Having never been a fan of traditional children's books, author Douglas Coupland decided it'd be fun to reinterpret the genre in a way that isn't suitable for most kids.

His new book Highly Inappropriate Tales for Young People, which he created with Canadian illustrator Graham Roumieu, probably won't be a big hit with parents.

But Coupland says he would have loved to have read something like it when he was young.

"I never read kids books, I hated them, I sort of thought they pandered to you," Coupland said in an interview. "If I had found this book when I was a kid I would've been, 'Yes! This confirms everything I thought about adulthood!' And I would've been quite happy, I think."

The book is more likely to be stocked in bookstores by Adam Mansbach and Ricardo Cortes' Go the (Bleep) to Sleep, than with with Dr. Seuss or Robert Munsch titles.

"I don't know who's going to read it, if it's kids, or maybe it's like you buy it and say, 'Kids, whatever you do, don't read this book' — and then hide it some place easy to find," says Coupland.

"Or hide it with a pack of cigarettes."
THE CANADIAN PRESS

D.J. WEIR

▶ Douglas Coupland

"Kids books in general, I think, treat kids like they're dumb."
AUTHOR DOUGLAS COUPLAND

Evil characters

Coupland's seven short stories feature characters like Donald the Incredibly Hostile Juice Box, who is made up of a little fruit juice and sugar, but mostly evil.

- He lives to torment other juice boxes by stabbing their foil straw holes and spilling out their insides.
- Or there's Sandra the Truly Dreadful Babysitter, who stays employed despite forcing children to shoplift and dabble in arson.

Death-defying Johnny Depp

Star has surprising reaction when engines stop on private plane with director Bruce Robinson

▶ Johnny Depp

Johnny Depp had a brush with death on a private plane recently, but at least he's taking it well.

"The plane just shut down. The sound of the engines stopped," Depp tells Life magazine of a flight he took with the Rum Diary director Bruce Robinson.

"Bruce and I were looking at each other and I think I said, 'Is this it?' It was like this weird extended moment when you're just floating for a second and you could feel this unpleasant descent."

The Pirates of the Caribbean star quickly realized what was happening, but his reaction wasn't expected.

"Nobody said a word except for Bruce and I, sitting next to each other saying, 'Oh s—! This is death. I guess this is how it goes down.' Then we burst into hysterical laughter at the idea that this was how we were going to die."

The engines soon kicked back on, though, and the flight returned to normal. METRO

DIVORCING THE KARDASHIANS

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Wait — you didn't really think we were done with Kim Kardashian, did you? Far from it, kupcakes. When there's a four-hour reality TV special on your $10 million wedding, you better believe there's weeks worth of gossip when you divorce 72 days later.

Humphries is 'devastated'

While Kim's statement was clearly written by her publicist while she went shopping, Humphries was a little less guarded: "I love my wife and am devastated to learn she filed for divorce," he said in a statement to E! News on Monday evening. "I'm committed to this marriage and everything this covenant represents. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make it work."

Are we starting to … feel bad for a member of the Kardashian family? Make this stop. Make this stop right now.

Won't somebody think of the diamonds?!

In the divorce filing, Kim asked that jewelry acquired during their marriage remain hers, according to E! Online. The actual pieces are unspecified, and we don't put it past this girl to accumulate some serious gems in 72 days. That said, we're pretty sure this has something to do with that $2 million diamond on her finger.

Our favourite explanation

If we start explaining the divorce, are we implying that the marriage was real? No matter, this one is too good to pass up: Kim was annoyed that Humphries began "chasing fame" and trying to break into Hollywood, reports TMZ. Save it for your three-part "moving on" special, lady.

TODAY'S THE WORD IS WRITTEN BY MONICA WEYMOUTH

We'll bite, Jess

After Kardashiangate broke, Jessica Simpson must have finally realized no one was going to pay her the $500,000 she was hoping to score for her pregnancy announcement.

Monday night, she posted a photo of herself on her personal website in a tight mummy costume, holding her pregnant belly with the caption: "It's true, I'm going to be a mummy." Congrats, Jess — months ago.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

▶ Kim Kardashian

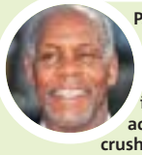
Celebrity tweets

@mindykaling
Can everyone buy my book please? I wanna quit the business and homeschool my kids real weird

@MissKelly0
the most important thing a girl wears is her confidence!

@The_Real_IMAN

i don't watch much tv! but how many days of marriage we're talking about? i'm always so late with these pop culture news!

@DonaldGlover

P.S. If you're a racially ambiguous girl in an insurance ad, I will crush on you something stupid.

Moore hits the town — alone

Demi Moore was spotted out recently, shaking off her recent marital troubles to enjoy a star-studded Halloween party in Beverly Hills, according to Us Weekly.

"She was having fun, [and] she drank. But she wasn't the belle of the ball. Everyone at the party was drunk," a source says.

Other guests at the bash included Cameron Diaz, Eli Roth and director Todd Phillips. Moore, though, showed up alone, with Ashton Kutcher nowhere to be seen.

METRO

▶ Demi Moore

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3 life

Hit the slopes early

With temperatures dropping and snow falling, early ski season never looked so good

SUSAN GREENWOOD
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

LIMAOSCARJULIET/FLICKR

▶ The weather pattern La Nina is responsible for dumping tons of snow across North America. That's good news for powder hounds eager to hit the slopes.

Two words: La Nina. It's a weather pattern, which simply put, dumps a ton of snow on North America – particularly in the north west and northern California. Last year it led to record snowfalls in many resorts — Mammoth saw 16.8 metres — while Fernie in British Columbia racked up 11 metres. If La Nina is back this year, and the signs are pointing to just that with colder-than-normal temperatures and heavy precipitation, then it's time to pick your resort.

Despite its relatively low altitude — the resort sits at 675 metres with the highest lift rising to 2,284 metres — Whistler, B.C., had a great season last year thanks to La Nina with 15.6 metres of snow falling.

Already the resort has seen remarkable snowfall with skiers riding the Blackcomb glacier as early as Oct. 6. Whistler is due to open on Nov. 24 and the resort is currently offering savings of up to 36 per cent on accommodation and lift pass packages if you book before Nov. 15. If it could get through the snow, that early bird could catch a great worm (whistlerblackcomb.com).

Keystone, Colo., will be throwing open its pistes on Nov. 4 with early-season skiers reaping the benefits of sophisticated snowmaking, sheltered tree runs and a superb snowpark without the crowds.

The resort shares the Epic pass with nearby Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Vail and A-Basin so good snow is not hard to find (keystone.com).

Grand Targhee, Wyo. saw 14.8 metres fall last season and its dry powder is the stuff of legends. The resort is so confident you will love it, it even offers a refund on your liftpass should your skiing be less than satisfactory (grandtarghee.com).

Alta, Utah has a base elevation of 2,600 metres, making skiing a definite possibility come Christmas, or before — it plans to open on Nov. 18 (alta.com).

If La Nina doesn't materialize you need a resort with good snowmaking, like Northstar-at-Tahoe, Calif. (northstarattahoe.com). Not only has the resort increased its skiable terrain by 10 per cent this season, but 50 per cent of it is covered by snowmaking facilities, so powder turns are guaranteed.

SOME OF THE BEST POWDER RESORTS IN NORTH AMERICA

MOUNT BAKER
Washington

▶ In 1999 Mt Baker held the record for the most snowfall in a season – 29 metres. Last year the small resort (only nine chairlifts) recorded 21.7 metres with 2.6 metres falling in November. Want powder? Head west. **mtbaker.us**

REVELSTOKE
British Columbia

▶ With over 1,214 hectares of skiable area and North America's greatest vertical drop, this modest resort near Golden is a powder-hound Mecca offering Heli and Cat Skiing from the village base. **revelstokemountainresort.com**

Travel in brief

Want first crack at the runs in Aspen? The Aspen Skiing Co. is offering an Ultimate Ski Pass that will let you have unlimited first tracks before chairlifts open to the public — for $25,000. The exclusive passes also allow holders to meet members of the U.S. Women's Ski Team when they race in Aspen on the U.S. Thanksgiving weekend.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gondola at Lake Louise ski resort to open for sightseeing rides this winter

Quick tips

EAT

▶ Empire Burger, in Breckenridge, Colo., is the perfect place to stop off for a mid-day meal: solid yet inventive burgers, decent prices and close to the bus stop. Job done. **empireburger.com**

STAY

▶ Located on British Columbia's 'Powder Highway' Revelstoke is the small resort with big powder stashes. If you've cash to splash the beautifully luxurious Bighorn lodge is new for 2011 and has it's own spa, pool and 1,263 hectares of terrain on its doorstep. **bighornrevelstoke.com**

LEARN

▶ If you fancy upping your ski game Custom Coaching in Beaver Creek, Colo., is launching an alpine ski coaching school for 2011/12 tackling tree runs, deep powder, bumps and steeps. Instruction is in a maximum group of four so when you faceplant not many people will see. **beavercreek.com**

EVENT

▶ Snow-blessed Californian mountain, Mammoth, opens for business on Nov. 10 and is celebrating with three days of music, events and giveaways with The Big Winter Kick Off. Expect snowboard film premieres, pro-riders and après tunes provided by DJs and bands including The Black Lips.**mammothmountain.com**

It's the great pumpkin

Halloween may be over, and while all that candy quickly disappears, those gourds are still all over the place Time to carve up a few desserts — and keep your sweet tooth happy

DINNER EXPRESS

EMILY RICHARDS
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

Here's a show-stopper dessert that uses delicious homemade caramel to add some pizzazz in flavour. The caramel firms up to give a slightly chewy toffee-like texture to these tarts and becomes the perfect backdrop for the pumpkin mousse to sit on. Warm the remaining caramel sauce and drizzle it over the tarts before serving.

Caramel Pumpkin Spice Mousse Tarts

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 ml) granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) water
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) hot whipping cream
- 12 baked tart shells

Pumpkin Spice Mousse:
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whipping cream
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) icing sugar
- 1 cup (250 ml) pumpkin or butternut squash puree
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) packed brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) each ground cinnamon and ginger
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) ground nutmeg

Caramel Pumpkin Spice Mousse Tarts Preparation:

1 In a high-sided heavy saucepan, stir together sugar and water over medium heat, stirring until dissolved. Increase heat to medium-high, cover and bring to a rolling boil. Uncover and boil, without stirring for about 10 minutes or until deep amber colour. Swirl pan as necessary to cook evenly. Remove from heat and slowly add hot cream. Stir with long-handled spoon until blended and bubbles subside.

2 Pour about 1 tbsp (15 ml) of the caramel into bottom of each baked tart shells. Refrigerate for 15 minutes or until caramel is set on top and reserve remaining caramel sauce.

3 In a large bowl, whip cream and icing sugar until they form stiff peaks. Using whisk, whisk in pumpkin, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg until no streaks remain. Scrape mousse into piping bag fitted with star tip, pipe into caramel-filled tart shells and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 1 day before serving. Tip: If you don't have a piping bag, fill a resealable plastic bag and pipe in filling or spoon into prepared tart shells.

4 Warm remaining caramel sauce and drizzle tarts before serving.

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND A TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA/
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ This recipe makes 12 tarts.

Cocktail of the week

Pumpkin Pie Punch

This blend of spices, apple cider and ginger ale is delicious and rich, yet still refreshing. Leave it as is for kids, but add vodka or rum for an adult version.

- 1 can (398 ml/14 oz) pumpkin puree
- 250 ml (1 cup) packed dark brown sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cinnamon
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground ginger
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) nutmeg
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves
- 2 l (8 cups) apple cider
- 2 l (8 cups) ginger ale

In a medium bowl, whisk together pumpkin, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Add apple cider and whisk until smooth and sugar is dissolved. Chill. In a punch bowl, gently stir together cider-pumpkin mixture and ginger ale. Serve with ice. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOES IT SEEM LIKE
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Weighing in on Solutions to the Obesity Problem

Amid a constant barrage of new diets and weight loss plans, people with excess weight continue to struggle.

Obesity is a worldwide epidemic with an estimated one billion adults being considered overweight or obese. Canada's most recent health statistics mirror that of other developed nations with 25% of adults found to be obese. Obesity is affecting men, women, and even children. It's a risk factor for other health conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.

At first glance, the main cause of this problem is excess calorie intake. We simply eat too much without burning off the extra calories. To combat this energy imbalance, weight loss can be achieved through diet and exercise programs.

Despite their on-going popularity, diet plans only help people lose weight in the short term. According to scientific research, less than 5% of dieters lose weight and maintain their weight loss for more than five years. In the long run, nothing changes and a relapse into old eating habits or inactivity eventually occurs.

Not only do diets not work, they can be counterproductive and damaging to a person's health and emotional wellbeing. Being on a diet often causes people to become preoccupied with food. Dieting can cause the body to go into "starvation mode", slowing down the metabolism because it thinks it will run out of food soon. It also sets up a cycle of overindulgence on forbidden foods, and feelings of guilt.

The diet mentality is so powerful it can cause thin people to gain weight once they've been put on a diet. One study found that dieting caused formerly diet-free people to have more cravings and frequent thoughts about food. After losing ten pounds, they promptly gained it all back plus an additional five pounds. The extra weight was harder to lose because the restriction in food intake had slowed their metabolism.

Many people find themselves looking for a weight loss solution that doesn't hinder their lifestyle or impose limits on the number of calories consumed. Contrary to popular belief, this is not impossible! Weight loss surgery may be the solution you have been looking for.

Until recently, weight loss surgery has been seen as a last resort. However, with the improved long-term success rate of procedures like the Slimband® adjustable gastric band, this perception is changing.

The Slimband® program typically results in up to 72% of excess weight being lost within the first 24 months. The procedure is a minimally-invasive, 20-minute operation in which a band is placed around the top part of the stomach to create a small pouch. Weight loss is maintained through permanent lifestyle changes with the band acting in the form of "built-in portion control" to help people feel full on less food.

The benefits of the Slimband® weight loss surgery procedure go far beyond a stunning physical transformation. Many people who lose weight with Slimband® have improved self-esteem, increased energy levels and elimination of many weight–related medical conditions.

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*Gastric banding results in an average of 58% excess weight loss within the first three years and patients continue to maintain their weight loss even up to seven years later. (Niville E et al. A mid-term Experience with the Cousin Biorin g - Adjustable Gastric Band. Obes Surg 2011; May 5. [EPub])

Do you wish you could stop dieting forever?

Have you made a major mistake?

You're sick of the subject you've chosen to study and contemplating a switch Take a moment to mull this over

NADIA ZAIDI
TALENTEGG.CA

ISTOCK

▶ Are you continuing your major because of family, societal or other exterior pressures? Dig deep and decide whether it's worth pursuing something you don't love.

Many students enter university knowing exactly what major they want to specialize in — at least they think they do.

But as students, we encounter new interests and challenges, giving us newfound perspective and knowledge. These insights can contradict existing notions and fall contrary to previous expectations.

I, for one, always knew that I wanted to study journalism, but I decided to enter university under another major so that I could work toward a greater understanding of my future program. In doing so, I built the proper knowledge, resources and mind-set required for journalism school.

But switching majors is not as easy as it seems. As someone who switched majors during my undergraduate degree, I know finding the right major for you can be difficult and overwhelming. There are many things to consider when doing so.

Meeting requirements

Each program has different requirements. Some programs are based on a grades-only application, whereas others require grades plus non-academic submissions, such as portfolios, or audio and tape submissions.

When I applied to Ryerson University's journalism program, I applied under the grades plus program, which required me to submit a select number of published works. I completed a lot of work outside school hours so that my portfolio would guarantee me acceptance into the program.

Switching to a more specialized program will demand a lot more than high grades. Additionally, if you are applying to a program that is in-demand, you should make sure that your grades surpass the minimum grade requirement to get into the program.

All-important advice:

- Being in the right major is crucial to your success and future opportunities, but remember that an education is what you make of it.
- Make an appointment with your academic co-ordinator or someone else who can help you weigh the pros and cons, and determine the best course of action.

Researching the program

Before deciding to switch programs, it is necessary to research exactly what your intended field of study entails. You can never know too much, so do your homework prior to switching majors.

Seek resources within your school; talk to department heads, people at the career centre and anyone who can help guide you in the right direction.

Do your research and don't forget about the simple, yet crucial requirements, such as having a minimum number of field-related courses and making sure that you do not miss crucial deadlines for transferring.

Sacrifice

Most people forget about the sacrifices that come with switching majors. When you decide to transfer programs you are agreeing to forfeit your existing major. Since program requirements vary, this could mean that the one or two years spent in your program will essentially be discredited and not counted toward your new major.

It also means having to start from scratch again. I was extremely happy to switch programs and be able to study my true calling. I was, however, a little disappointed when I realized that all my hard work was not going to be accounted for. It is a difficult reality to grapple with, especially if you are someone who wants to finish school as quickly as possible, or if you face major financial constraints.

Then there are other minor inconveniences such as the transfer process, which can be difficult and laborious. There are many forms to fill, fees to pay and places to drop things off to.

Ultimately, however, you have to be in a major that is complementary to your abilities and preferences. If you are unhappy with what you are studying, it is not worth spending your time and money continuing.

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Don't even go there at the office

JULIA WEST
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN NEW YORK

ISTOCK

▶ It's all fun and giggles until someone loses the respect of their team.

Most of us know never to discuss politics and religion at work, but there are other topics that are equally as taboo. These subjects are off-limits around the boss, and even around the watercooler.

Relationship status

A recent survey conducted by Adecco polled more than 800 Americans and revealed that 23 per cent find relationship status to be the most taboo topic in the office. According to the survey, relationship status is even more uncomfortable to talk about than politics (chosen as most taboo by 16 per cent surveyed) and religion (which came first with 10 per cent of those polled). The takeaway: Save talk about breakups and makeups for your friends and family.

Physical appearance

"Unless you work in a Hollister, your physical appearance probably doesn't have a huge role in your performance at work," says Anthony Morrison, vice-president of career networking service Cachinko. "Talking about things like weight, clothing and looks can be hurtful to company morale."

Of course, it's also wise to avoid talking about how attractive you find a co-worker.

Socioeconomic status

Ben Dattner is the author of The Blame Game, a book that explores the psychology of pointing the finger at work. Dattner finds that discussing your lavish lifestyle in the office can cause a rift between employees.

"If you let co-workers know that you are spending the holidays at your family's 55,000-square-foot ski chalet in Aspen, or even that you own your home while they rent theirs, they will likely have a hard time relating to you and may even resent you," says Dattner.

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A MINISTRY MAKES THE WRONG MOVE

Is the public interest being subverted? Think twice when complaining to a provincial ministry of labour

WORKPLACE LAW

DANIEL LUBLIN
DAN@CANADAEMPLOYMENTLAWYER.COM
TWITTER: @DANLUBLIN

An individual's experience, related below, provides an example of why you must be careful when you call a provincial Ministry of Labour.

Following her termination, an individual contacted the Ontario Ministry of Labour, seeking some advice about her situation. She had not yet contacted a lawyer and the ministry representative who was randomly assigned to pick up the phone did not immediately encourage her to do so.

ISTOCK

▶ An over-the-phone representative from the Ministry of Labour should not be confused with a lawyer, as the advice the individual gives may lead to complications in court.

The individual planned to contest her dismissal and so the representative immediately encouraged her to file a complaint. This was the first error. Although the Ministry enforces the provincial legislation, it cannot provide a remedy for more significant claims for wrongful dismissal since most of those claims generally exceed the scope of the legislation.

As well, even though the Ministry could easily address and then remedy the complaint, this was not the problem. It was that once it has taken steps to do so, an individual loses the right to later file a wrongful dismissal claim in court. Here, since this person's damages were in excess of the statutory minimum, the bulk of her damages then would be relinquished — an issue that most employment lawyers would spot as a matter of course.

The Ministry has many safeguards, but they are not always effective. No surprise there. After most complaints are made, the Ministry mails the claimant a standard form letter explaining that if the complaint is not withdrawn within two weeks, the claimant will not be able to later file a wrongful dismissal claim. However, since most people will believe, even if incorrectly, that they received "advice" from a Ministry, they are unlikely to withdraw their complaint or later pay for a lawyer's time to obtain a second opinion. The result is that they are then stuck with their original claim.

This example is not an exception. The Ministry's hotline, which fields calls from prospective complaints, should explain only what the Act says and how it may have been interpreted in the past. There is no mandate to provide recommendations, or worse, to provide advice. Yet it happens anyway when the general public or some of the Ministry's representatives habitually blur this distinction. When they do, the public's interests may be subverted.

DANIEL LUBLIN IS AN EMPLOYMENT LAWYER WITH WHITTEN & LUBLIN LLP.

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First-place hopes on Brink

Backup thrust into spotlight with 1st-round bye on line ◆ Pierce hopes to return for playoffs

BRUCE FEDYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Blue Bombers quarterback Alex Brink, left, hands off to running back Chris Garrett last Friday at Canad Inns Stadium.

Paul LaPolice was driving home the day after his Winnipeg Blue Bombers lost to Toronto when he decided to phone backup quarterback Alex Brink.

Brink had replaced injured Buck Pierce in the game when the score was 17-3 and battled back in what ended up being a 27-22 Argonauts victory last Friday.

"I just wanted to kind of say, 'Hey, good job in the game. I know we didn't win, but you did some good things and brought us back,'" the Bombers head coach said after his team's practice yesterday.

It's promising that LaPolice had positive things to say about Brink's performance because the second-year pivot will be starting in a crucial game in Calgary on Saturday while Pierce recovers from a sprained right knee.

If the Bombers (10-7) defeat the Stampeders (10-7), they'll clinch first place in the CFL's East Division over the Montreal Alouettes (10-7).

The Als play the B.C. Lions (10-7) later that day. If Winnipeg and Montreal finish the regular season tied, the Bombers get top spot and the bye by virtue of winning their season series 2-1.

Brink started just once this year when Pierce was sitting with bruised ribs.

"I'm back," Brink said with a smile as reporters surrounded him after practice.

"I'm very excited. It's an incredible opportunity. Obviously, it's under unfortunate circumstances with Buck's injury, but I'm ready to go."

Pierce's latest injury happened when Argo defensive back Lin-J Shell fell on him while he threw an interception that Byron Parker took 50 yards for a touchdown.

2nd Brink will be making his second start this season and third of his CFL career. He started in a 32-26 loss to Montreal on Sept. 30.

The seven-year veteran said his knee is sore, but he hopes treatment will get him back in time for the playoffs.

"I had a slight (medial collateral ligament) tear last year early in the year and it's not quite as bad as that," said Pierce, who missed three games with that injury.

"I'm not going to put a timeline on this one. It feels better than the one I had last year, but they still want to be cautious and still make sure I can move around."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bombers accept Sears' suspension

The CFL suspended defensive back Johnny Sears Jr. of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers one game without pay yesterday for his controversial hit on Toronto Argonauts quarterback Steven Jyles.

The league rendered the decision after Sears spoke with CFL commissioner Mark Cohon earlier in the day about levelling Jyles with a vicious head shot in Toronto's 27-22 road win over Winnipeg on Friday night.

Jyles was sliding feet-first in the fourth quarter when Sears drove his helmet into Jyles' head, which bounced violently off the turf, briefly knocking the quarterback unconscious.

"As I have maintained since the hit Friday, no player is allowed to lead with his helmet. We understand and accept the decision."

BOMBERS COACH PAUL LAPOLICE ON THE JOHNNY SEARS JR. SUSPENSION

Sears was ejected and Jyles eventually was able to walk to the locker-room. Jyles is questionable for Toronto's season finale tomorrow night against the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

"While I appreciate the sincerity of the player in his conversation with me today, this was a reckless and dangerous hit that must be met with appropriate discipline," Cohon said in a statement. "In our league, with just an 18-game schedule, this is a significant and effective penalty."

Sears will be eligible to return to the lineup for the CFL playoffs.

"I accept the commissioner's decision to suspend me and know I am accountable for the consequences of my actions on the field," Sears said. "It was a split-second action and as much as I did not intentionally try to engage in helmet-to-helmet contact, I did, and for that I understand the decision made today."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tweet fines

The CFL fined Argos Rob Murphy and Taylor Robertson for reactions to the hit on Twitter. Both are injured and missed the game.

- "0 (Sears) is lucky I'm not in the province of Manitoba tonight. They would need the Jaws of Life to pry me off of him. I have a good memory. See ya next year, 0," Murphy tweeted.
- Added Robertson: "I don't know who the hell this #0 guy is, but I hope to hell he's in the league next year. I'll take the ejection. I don't care."

4 sports

Quoted

"I have gained a better understanding (of) how I need to continue to play the game to help my team win."

DETROIT LIONS DEFENSIVE TACKLE NDAMUKONG SUH, AFTER MEETING WITH NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL AND HIS STAFF YESTERDAY TO CLARIFY QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS PLAY AND THE GAME. SUH REQUESTED THE BYE-WEEK SESSION IN NEW YORK AT NFL HEADQUARTERS TO TALK ABOUT THE FLAGS AND FINES HE HAS RECEIVED.

Scan code for more sports.

5 drive

Engine

Very little has changed beneath the hood of both gasoline-engine Camrys, although Toyota now rates the standard-issue 178-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder at 8.2 l/100 km in the city and 5.6 on the highway, compared to the 2011 model's 9.0/6.0 numbers. Meanwhile, the carryover 268-horsepower 3.5-litre V-6 achieves a claimed 9.7/6.4 city/highway, compared with 10.6/6.8 before.

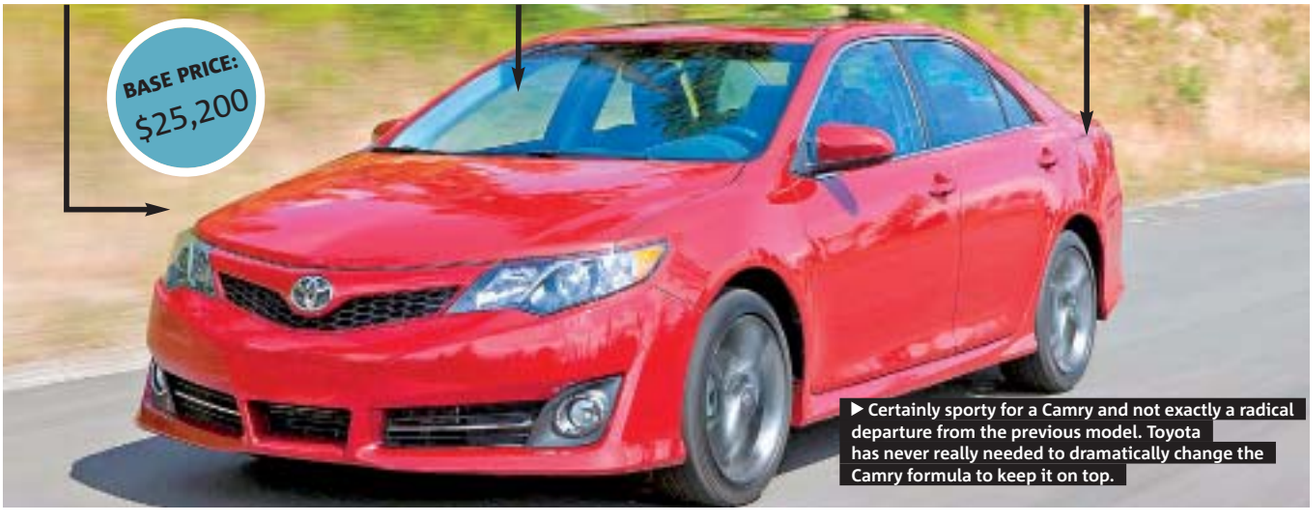
Interior

The interior is where this Camry makes a definitive statement. The organically-shaped dashboard presents a layered appearance and lacks the former droopy look.

As well, the dash and control panel's shiny bits added to up-level models are tastefully done. Buyers can now choose from four different upholstery finishes, depending on the model, from woven fabric on base models to leather with faux suede seat covers at the luxury end of the scale.

Gas-saving Hybrid

Easily the most impressive fuel-efficiency gain originates from the new Camry Hybrid. Toyota has installed a 156-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine that replaces the 147-horse 2.4-litre. The 2.5 functions in tandem with an electric motor. Most importantly, fuel-economy numbers improve to 4.5 l/100 km in the city and 4.9 highway, versus 5.7 city and highway for the 2011 Hybrid. Additionally, the more compact battery system located behind the rear seat means more trunk space.



▶ Certainly sporty for a Camry and not exactly a radical departure from the previous model. Toyota has never really needed to dramatically change the Camry formula to keep it on top.

By comparison

Ford Fusion
Base price: $21,600
Popular four-door offered with manual gearbox, plus fuel-sipping hybrid version.

Honda Accord
Base price: $26,200
Comfy cabin plus excellent road manners makes this a fun-to-drive sedan.

2013 Chevrolet Malibu
Base price: $25,000 (est.)
New sedan has four cylinders and a part-hybrid model.

WHEELBASE MEDIA

What you always get in a Camry ... and more

MALCOLM GUNN
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA
WHEELBASE MEDIA

It has been a rocky road for the Toyota faithful as the company recovers from natural disaster and a rash of very public — and extensive — recalls that threw into question its normally cut-above-the-rest reputation.

So, the question is whether the new seventh-generation Camry and Camry Hybrid will get you down to the dealership to sign on the dotted line.

Honestly, it should, based on a number of key incremental improvements to fuel economy and interior quality in particular.

Despite the best efforts of the Honda Accord, Chevrolet Malibu and Hyundai Sonata, the Camry has owned the numero uno spot outright for the past decade.

And it has managed this feat by playing it safe with styling, steadily improving its safety and technology features and offering its loyal owners plenty of cabin comfort and refinement.

For 2012, the Camry's oh-so-subtle physical changes include a pointier front end, chiselled front fenders and an accent crease extending across the doors and fenders.

Compared to a similarly contented 2011 base model, the list price has been reduced by $1,600.

You might consider that a return-to-full-strength bonus, however for the conservative Camry, saving money is always in fashion.

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Sportage provides a sturdy SUV ride

SECOND GEAR

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
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Looking for a second-hand family hauler crossover?

The second-generation Kia Sportage is worth a check.

It's a five-seat compact ute that was available with four or six-cylinder power.

Sizing was in roughly the same ballpark as the Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4 and Ford Escape.

The second-generation Sportage's lifespan on our shores ran from model years 2005 to 2009, with a mandatory makeover and refresh part way through.

2005 to '09 Kia Sportage

Engine

Look for a two-litre, 140-horsepower four-cylinder or a 2.7-litre V-6 with 173. Automatic or manual transmissions and front or four-wheel drive were available.

What owners like

Sportage owners enjoy a sturdy ride, compact handling and parking dynamics, confidence on slippery roads and plenty of real-world versatility. Overall interior and exterior styling are also rated highly, as is fuel efficiency with the four-cylinder engine.

What owners dislike

Complaints tend to centre mainly around poor engine performance, bare-bones equipment levels on low-end models, and excessive wind-noise at higher speeds.

Common issues

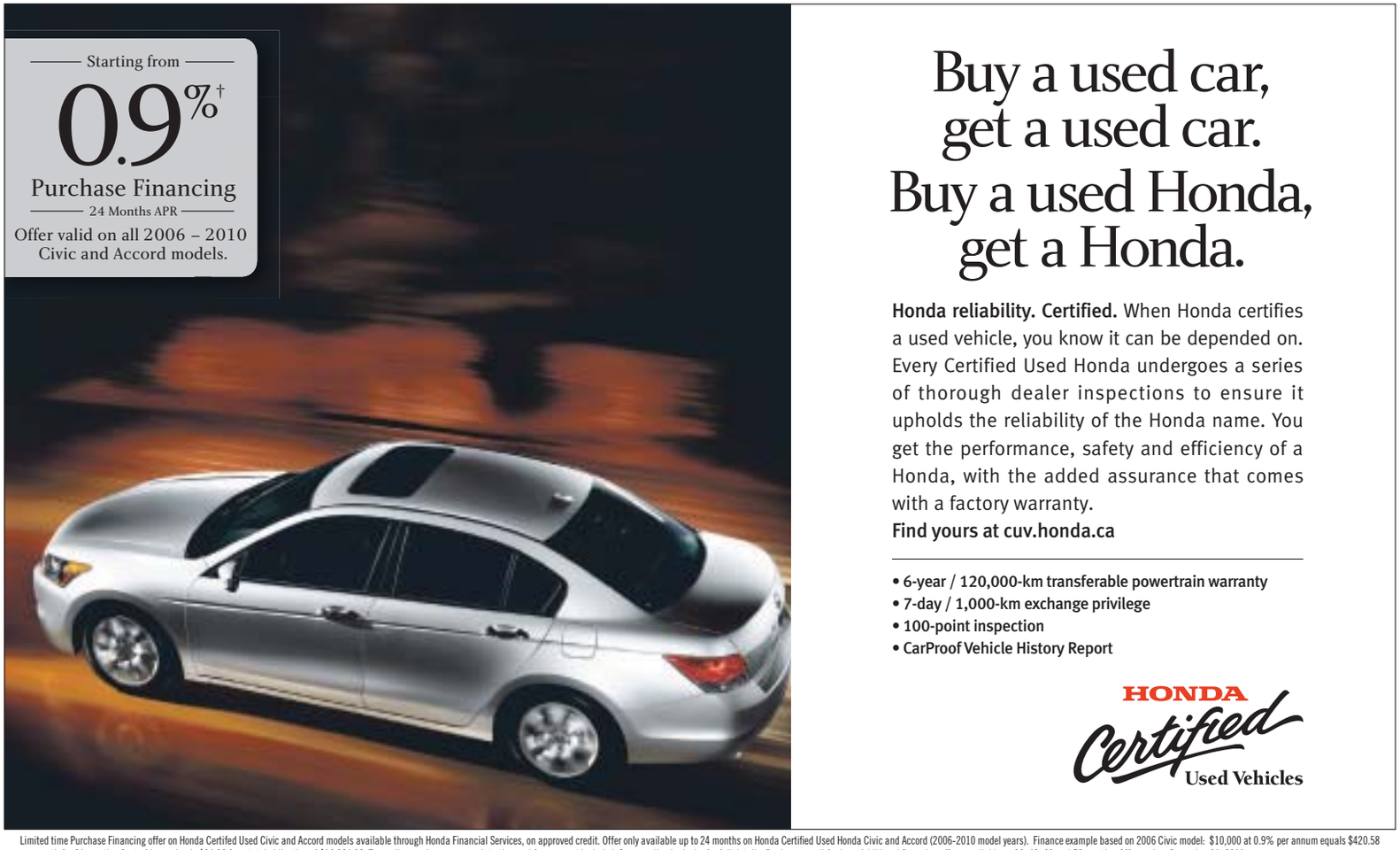
Ensure the cruise control and air conditioning work properly.

If the engine seems to "sputter" or deliver power in a "lumpy" fashion, the culprit could be a clogged fuel filter or a bad engine control sensor. Note that a mechanic can scan the engine computer for potential engine sensor issues.

Models with the automatic transmission that shift harshly or abruptly could be suffering from a computer-related problem as well.

Verdict

Where reliability is concerned, the Sportage looks like a solid second-hand bet. Thanks to relatively low resale values, one won't be required to sever an appendage when it comes time to pay.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Even Porsche is into saving fuel

New 911 Carrera boasts coasting function, among other features

DRIVING FORCE

JIL McINTOSH
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA

It's doubtful that fuel prices are the first thing people think about when they buy a sports car, but even automakers primarily concerned with performance need to worry about efficiency. One of the methods Porsche is using is its new coasting function.

It's found on the new 2012 Porsche 911 Carrera with automatic dual-clutch PDK transmission.

When you're cruising along in the top seventh gear and you don't need engine power, the system will temporarily go into neutral to conserve fuel.

"When you come off the gas (without the system) and there's engine braking, the car slows down because there's drag," says Laurance Yap, director of marketing for Porsche Canada. "This removes this effect and allows you to cruise at speed for quite a while, depending on what the conditions are."

The system is electronic and the gearshift lever doesn't move into neutral. If the driver puts his foot on the throttle, the engine hooks up again immediately.

"The car slows down a lot less than if you were to take your foot off the gas in a normal condition," Yap says. Since many drivers are on and off on the throttle on the highway, "it lets you conserve some of this kinetic energy rather than frittering it away with engine braking," he says.

PORSCHE CANADA

▶ In European testing, the 2012 Porsche 911 Carrera achieves 16.3 per cent better fuel economy than the previous model.

The engine doesn't stop running, but since it's not actively powering the wheels, it drops down to idle speed, reducing its fuel requirement.

The coasting function is one of several fuel-saving features on the redesigned 911 Carrera, along with lighter-weight construction, an auto-stop system that shuts off the gasoline engine when sitting at a light, an electrical system that captures braking energy, and low-rolling-resistance tires. The coasting function can generate fuel savings of 0.2 L/100 km, which isn't all that much on its own but which combines with other features to bring down fuel consumption. In European testing, the new model achieves 16.3 per cent better fuel economy than the previous 911 Carrera.

The new coasting function is part of the stop-stop function in the PDK transmission, and both can be shut off by the driver if preferred.

And while the driving experience is the top priority for most Porsche owners, Yap says they still think about fuel consumption.

"I think this efficiency is part of the 911 story," he says.

"The other reality is that whether buyers care or not, we have to do what we can to meet the consumption regulations as well, and all of this is part of that strategy."

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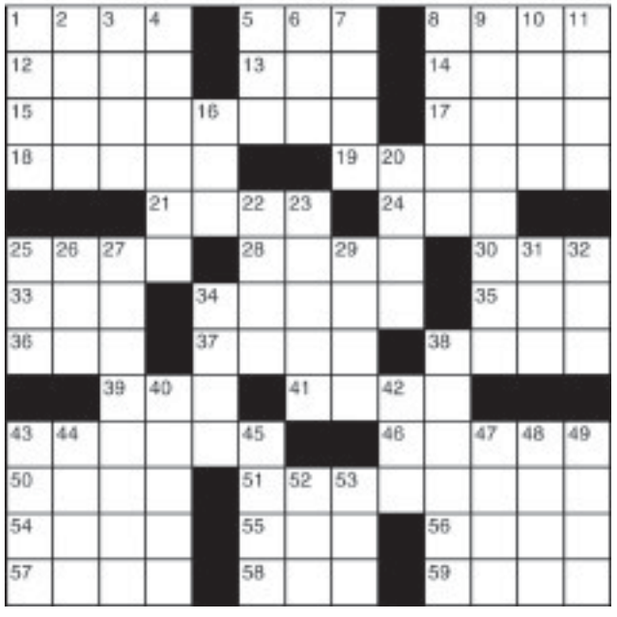
Crossword



Across

1 — and crafts
5 Life story, for short
8 Rim
12 Jump
13 Toss in
14 Caboose's position
15 Excited commotion
17 Muhammad and Laila
18 TV oldie, "Kate & —"
19 Used-car deal, e.g.
21 Small barrel
24 Kitten's call
25 Snatch
28 Places
30 Carte lead-in
33 Tackle moguls
34 Gold measure
35 In medias —
36 Crony
37 Basin accessory
38 Pelican's pride
39 Indivisible
41 Mimic
43 Ivanhoe's love
46 Bra seller's mannequin
50 "Sad to say, ..."
51 Lunchbox item, often
54 Catcher's aid
55 Snoop
56 Run-down residential area
57 Cookware
58 Moment
59 "Desire Under the —"

Down

1 Actress Jessica
2 Actual
3 Lofty
4 Repair, as film
5 Scrooge's cry
6 Altar affirmative
7 Smell
8 Obliterate
9 First State
10 Author Sheehy
11 Gaelic
16 Verily
20 Send out
22 Cabbage salad
23 "M*A*S*H" setting
25 Recipe meas.
26 Alias (Abbr.)
27 Electric power unit
29 Complain repeatedly
31 Meadow
32 Request
34 Acute
38 Shop aimlessly
40 Birds' homes
42 Schedule abbr.
43 Freeway access
44 Hodgepodge
45 Venomous vipers
47 Streamlet
48 Icky pond surface
49 Resistance units
52 Exist
53 Big Apple letters

▶ Yesterday's answer

Sudoku

		2		9			3	
						6		
5	9	8	3	4				1
2		6	1			3		
				3				
		7			4	2		8
1				2	9	5	7	6
		4						
	5			7		1		

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

3	7	9	1	4	2	8	5	6
1	6	4	3	8	5	2	9	7
2	8	5	7	6	9	4	1	3
8	4	6	9	7	1	5	3	2
5	1	3	6	2	8	7	4	9
9	2	7	4	5	3	6	8	1
6	3	2	8	9	4	1	7	5
4	5	1	2	3	7	9	6	8
7	9	8	5	1	6	3	2	4

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, online at metronews.ca/kiss.

Beautiful - When I said you had this guys heart I meant it, I do love you. The problem is you took it and flew away with it. Now i'm in Nova Scotia, heartless. I know you might not see this but I just want to say i'm still very deeply/strongly in love with you. I'm waiting by for you counting the moments until you return, until you bring this guys heart back and cherish it with him, together, as one. I love you Beautiful forever and always <3
FROM LOVE, YOUR E-VAN

Jessica Goyette - I love you so much baby your my best friend and someone I can always count on for having my back. We just recently passed our one year and I'm so glad to be with you. Your everything I want and your the girl that helps me keep my head high. I love you so much forever xoxo <3
BRADEN SEABROOK

A look at the weather

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Min -2°	Min -3°	Min -1°
Max 6°	Max 13°	Max 7°

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Jenna Khan, Weather Specialist

"Weather impacts everything we do. Providing the information you need before you head out that door and take on the day is the best part of my morning." **WEEKDAYS 6AM**

Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 You have no fear at the moment and will follow your desires wherever they might lead.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Don't give away what should remain yours.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Cosmic activity in your opposite sign encourages you to accept that other people's opinions and your opinions differ in legitimate ways.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 atch out you don't get carried away with your own brilliance today.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 Today's cosmic developments will do wonders for your confidence and encourage you to believe that anything is possible.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 You may not be the most emotional member of the zodiac but you will feel deeply for someone today.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 There is a danger that in your eagerness to get ahead and get the most from each and every situation you will overlook some small but important detail.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 It's not like you to be free and easy with money but you are in one of those moods where you really don't care

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 You need a challenge that will bring out the best in you

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 There is no limit to what you can accomplish now

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 What happens over the next two or three days will open your eyes to new possibilities

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. You must play by the rules today, even if you know you can get away with cutting corners.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

ROB O'NEAL/AP-FLORIDA

MARKUS SCHREIBER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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